

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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SUBJ: "OBSERVER" COMMENTS ON LEBANON

1. SUMMARY. PRAVDA (APRIL 8) CARRIES AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT ON LEBANON BY "OBSERVER" WHICH IMPLIES CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBLE WIDER CONSEQUENCES OF CONTINUED FIGHTING, THE ADVERSE EFFECT ON PALESTINIAN UNITY CAUSED BY THE LEBANESE CONFLICT, AND SOME SUSPICION AND UNCERTAINTY REGARDING U.S. DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO "OBSERVER," THE LEBANESE IMBORGLIO REFLECTS EFFORTS OF "IMPERIALIST FORCES AND INTERNAL REACTION" TO
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DIVERT ARAB ATTENTION FROM THE "STRUGGLE FOR THE LIBERATION" OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND "TO STRIKE A BLOW"

AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND THE "NATIONAL-PATRIOTIC FORCES OF LEBANON." THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE IMPERIALIST FORCES, OBSERVER CONTINUES, IS "TO LIQUIDATE LEBANON AS A SOVEREIGN INDEPENDENT STATE." THE VIEW THAT THE CONFLICT IS A "RELIGIOUS-COMMUNAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS" IS REJECTED AS "NAIVE," OBSERVER IS MILDLY POSITIVE ON SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS, AND STATES THAT THE SITUATION CONTAINS "THE DANGER OF A NEW EXPLOSION" FRAUGHT WITH GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR LEBANON AND THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST. IN DISCUSSING THE MACHINATIONS OF IMPERIALISTS, OBSERVER HITS AT THE MOVEMENT OF THE SIXTH FLEET TOWARD LEBANON, AND CONDEMNS THE ENEMIES OF DETENTE--SENATOR JACKSON IS SINGLED OUT--WHO SUPPORT SUCH A MOVE, AND WHO REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE "CONDITIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA" HAVE CHANGED IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. OBSERVER LAUNCHES THE REQUIRED BIRCKBATS AT ISRAELI "PROVOCATIONS" TOWARD LEBANON, AND CLAIMS ISRAEL IS ACTING IN LEAGUE WITH THE IMPERIALIST-REACTIONARY VILLAINS. AS FOR THE "PRINCIPLED" POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION, OBSERVER STATES THAT MOSCOW FIRMLY OPPOSES "IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION" IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, AND SUPPORTS THE RIGHT OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN FATE.

3. THE SOVIET UNION, OBSERVER CONTINUES, STANDS ON THE SIDE OF "THOSE LEBANESE FORCES WHICH ARE FIGHTING FOR THE NATIONAL UNITY AND (TERRITORIAL) INTEGRITY" OF LEBANON. A RESOLUTION OF THE LEBANESE CONFLICT, OBSERVER CONCLUDES, IS AN "IMPORTANT FACTOR" FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "UNITED ARAB FRONT" TO FIGHT FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF THE RESULTS OF ISRAELI AGGRESSION AND FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. OBSERVER CLOSES ON A SOMEWHAT ENIGMATIC NOTE AS HE STATES THAT "THE FRIENDS OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE WISH THEM SUCCESS" IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, AND FOR THE INTEGRITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE OF LE ANON.

4. COMMENT. THIS IS THE FIRST AUTHORITATIVE SOVIET COMMENT ON LEBANON IN QUITE SOME TIME, AND WE SUSPECT
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THAT IT WAS TRIGGERED BY SOVIET SUSPICIONS OF AND UNDER-
TAINTY OVER U.S. DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS CENTERING ON THE
MISSION OF AMBASSADOR BROWN. SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS
STRIKES US AS LESS ENTHUSIASTIC THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN
EXPECTED. THE REPEATED REFERENCES TO ARAB UNITY AND THE IMPLIED
NEED TO SET THE ARAB HOUSE IN ORDER COULD ALSO REFLECT
MOSCOW'S CONCERN THAT THE LEBANESE TURMOIL HAS SERIOUSLY
SPLIT THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT, THUS WEAKENING ONE
OF THE PRINCIPAL PILLARS OF SOVIET MIDDLE EAST POLICY.
THE OVERALL FOCUS OF THE STATEMENT IS LESS ON THE REALITIES

OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION THAN ON SOVIET CONCERN THAT FURTHER
TURMOIL COULD ENGULF THE ENTIRE REGION, AND THAT THE CONFLICT IS
DIVERTING ARAB ATTENTION FROM THE REAL STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL.
THUS,, ON BALANCE, OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THE
STATEMENT IS A CAUTIONARY SIGNAL ESSENTIALLY ADDRESSED
TO THE U.S. WHICH COULD WELL STEM FROM SOVIET FRUSTRATION
OVER THE INABILITY OF "ITS SIDE" TO SETTLE THE LEBANESE
CONFLICT, AND, IN A MORE GENERAL WAY, TO STAY TOGETHER.
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